

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO. []

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Austria/USSR

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SUBJECT League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters
(Verband Antifaschistischer Freiheitskämpfer)

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO. []

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THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF THE ESPIONAGE ACT 50 U.S.C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION

* As indicated below

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

I. Friction between the KPOe Central Committee and the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters

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1. A spirit of rivalry has allegedly been developing for some time between the Central Committee and the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters. As a result, a majority of the members of the Central Committee have taken an active stand against further expansion of the League; only HONNER, FUERNBERG, KOPLINIG and STEINHARDT are continuing to lend their support. The general feeling of the Central Committee is that the League, instead of subordinating its activity to the Communist Party, which in their opinion normally carried on the fight against fascism, has attempted to strengthen its position by expanding into a separate organization. The League, for its part, reproaches the KPOe with failure to supply financial assistance and the proper support for political demonstrations. The following incident, which was reported in the Austrian newspapers, is an example of non-cooperation between the two rival groups. During a demonstration by the League against the restitution of an apartment in Vienna to its Nazi owner, a fight took place in which the Nazi was badly injured by a certain EBNER. The KPOe District chief of Vienna II, KESSELBAUER, had intervened on behalf of the Nazi, and the League resolved to demand the resignation of KESSELBAUER in the event of an unfavorable sentence. This dissension finds expression in a decision of the Vienna II Headquarters of the League to accept KPOe officials as members only if the officials will sign an individual contract with the League and otherwise meet its prerequisites for membership; similar decisions are expected from other District Headquarters of the League. This does not mean, however, that the League intends to discontinue all its former activity on behalf of the KPOe. As heretofore, the KPOe will use the League as an armed guard to maintain order at meetings and for such jobs as distributing propaganda.

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2. According to a membership register, there are 80 members of this organization in Vienna VI, VII, and VIII. They were not allowed to participate in the May Day parade as a separate unit because the representation was not large enough. Forty members from Vienna XXI and 50 members from Vienna XI took part in the parade.

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3. The total number of members is about 2,200. The League is strong in the following Vienna districts: II, V, XI, XX, XXI and XXII. There are 160 members of whom 60 are activists in Vienna II; 76 members took part in the demonstrations on May Day. The Vienna II leader is a certain SCHEMEL, supported by JURKOVIC and SINGER.

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4. The following figures were reported on the strength of the League in the various Vienna districts: Vienna VI, 36 men; Vienna VII, 44 men; Vienna VIII, 8 men; Vienna X, 80 members, including 20 women; Vienna XII, approximately 120 members, including 28 women; Vienna XVI, 130 men, 33 of whom are officials; Vienna XXII, approximately 250 members.

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5. At a meeting the Provincial Chairman for Upper Austria, FRISCHMANN, and the Provincial Leader for Carinthia, SIMONER, discussed the strength of the organization in the provinces. FRISCHMANN said that the six local groups (Ortsgruppen) located in Linz, Urfahr, Wels, Braunau, and Salzkammergut, are still weak because of opposition by reactionary officials working for occupation authorities. The League was not strong enough to organize an attempt to disrupt a rally of the Verband Unabhängigen (Union of Independents) in upper Austria called by Dr. Herbert KRAUS and attended by 10,000 persons. SIMONER said that the six groups in Carinthia, three of which are in Klagenfurt, Villach, and Hermager, are also weak. The local inhabitants are openly hostile to the membership and have demonstrated this feeling in Eisenkappel and Arnoldstein.

III. Organization of the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters

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6. Four men and a leader compose a group in the League organization; four groups, consisting of twenty men, are under the command of an action group commander. The files on these activists are kept separate from those of other members.

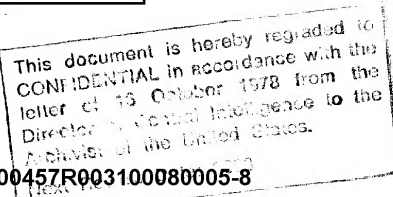
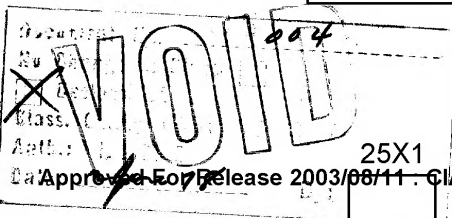
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7. The following officials of the League are reported for various Vienna Districts; Vienna XIX: District Leader, Leopold BUCHAUER, Rudolphe KOSETLER, Herta POSEL, Leopold SPITALER, Viktor HUNAL, and Leopold EUMINGER. Vienna XXII: District Leader, Ferdinand SELINGER residing at Vienna XXII, Erzherzog Karlstrasse 104; Deputy Raimund SPIROCH, residing at Vienna XXII, Konstanziagasse 44; District Organization Leader, Adolph MATZEK, residing at Vienna XXI, Graulichgasse 21.*

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8. At a meeting of the League [redacted] the following persons were elected to the Vienna Province leadership: Provincial Leader, Erich FEIN; Provincial Secretary, HAMMERLING; and Provincial Treasurer, PAVIAN; also ~~elector~~ ~~elector~~ for ~~following League members~~; one Julius SIGMETH; Josef GRADL of Vienna XVI; Johann GRIFFTNER of Vienna XXI; Gustav HOELZL, residing at Vienna IV, Schelleingasse 43/9; Gustav SITLIE, of Vienna III; one LUTER of Vienna X; Hans MORAWA of Vienna XVII; and Johann NEUMEIER, residing in Vienna XXI, Floridsdorfer Hauptstrasse 29/7.

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9. One SCHWIGELHOFER, Vienna VII, Burggasse 88, has been appointed as organization leader of the League for the Vienna VI, VII, and VIII Districts. SCHWIGELHOFER has been a member of the Communist Party since 1945 and has attended a three-month Party course. He is head of the personnel section of the USIA construction firm, Negrelli Bau A.G., Vienna IV, Prinz-Eugen Strasse 72.

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10. Willi LANZAT, born 25 April 1913, residing at Vienna VII, Mariahilferstrasse 118, IV/III/43, recently joined the League and was given membership No. 1561.

IV. Meeting places in Vienna of the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters

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11. The following is a list of meeting places and hours for members of the League in the various districts of Vienna:**

Vienna District N
Number

Street Address

Time of meeting

II	League Assembly Rooms, Grösse-Mohrengasse	Tuesdays at 1900 hours
III	Gasthaus Eichler, Rabengasse 6	Fridays, at 1900 hours
IV	Wiedner Hauptstrasse 10 c, Stair 22	Mondays at 1900 hours
IV and VIII	Vienna VII, Gasthaus Effert, Kaiserstrasse 120	First Monday of the month
VII	Wimbergergasse 30, doorway 4	
IX	Gasthaus Engelbrecht, Sobieskiplatz;	First Wednesday of the month at 1900 hours
X	Gasthaus Pfuetz, Pernerstorfergasse 9	First Monday of the month
XI	Kinderland Assembly Room, Strindberggasse 1	First and third Wednesdays of the month at 1900 hours
XII	Gasthaus Bernhard, Ruckergasse 46	

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XIII	Gasthaus Hilzer, Hietzinger Kai 173	
XIV	Gasthaus Jamschegg, Linzer Strasse 399	Fridays at 1930 hours
XV	Gasthaus Lach, Preysingasse 22; first	First Tuesdays of the month at 1900 hours
XVI	Gasthaus Fischl, Thaliastrasse 92	Second Wednesday of the month at 1900 hours
XVII	Gasthaus Machowetz, Gschwandnergasse 11	Last Thursday of the month at 1930 hours
XVIII	Waehringerstrasse 177	Second Friday of the month at 1900 hours
XIX	Gasthaus Lager, Heiligenstaedter Strasse 115	Second Monday of the month at 1900 hours
XX	Wagnergasse 17; Leader of this group is Alfred FRANK.	Tuesdays at 1900 hours
XXI	Gasthaus Sillip, Praegerstrasse 46	
XXII	Gasthaus Boecksteiner, Gemeindegasse 6	Second Friday in the month

V. Financial Condition of the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters

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12. The League intends to exclude members who fall too far behind in paying the monthly dues, as well as those who do not attend meetings. About fifty members in Vienna II will be affected by this measure. The economic situation is by no means critical, since the only paid official is General Secretary SCHNEIDER who receives 600 to 700 schillings per month. The District Headquarters have no overhead and the monthly publication, Der Freiheitskaempfer, is published free of charge by Globus-Verlag and distributed without cost. Some financial assistance is doubtless received from the Soviets.

VI. Policy of the League of Anti-Fascist Freedom Fighters

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13. [] League members from Vienna VI, VII and VIII took part in a social gathering at the Gasthaus Effert, Vienna VII, Kaiserstrasse 120. There were seven members present from Vienna VI, twelve from Vienna VII, one member from Vienna VIII, and three women guests. In the course of an informal talk, the chairman discussed the present political situation and stated that the year [] would be a challenging one for the organization. He said that specific plans of action for the future would be discussed when a more private meeting place was assigned to them. In connection with these plans, the chairman observed that members of the organization represented an avant-garde and ranked higher than other members of the Party. Finally, he mentioned that the best relationship between the Socialist Party and the KPOe in Vienna existed in Vienna XVIII.

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14. [redacted] a district meeting of the League took place in Vienna VII which was attended by thirty members. MAZEK, a guest speaker from the League's Vienna XXII Headquarters, compared the League's mission to that of the militant Schutzbund in 1934 and said that only those who are willing to bear arms for the League, if necessary, are acceptable for membership. MAZEK said that all future plans for the organization would be confidential until put into effect.

15. A specially summoned general meeting of the League [redacted] was attended by 136 persons, including the KPOe Central Committee member, Friedrich HEXMANN. An organization statute was revised to admit to membership in the League persons who have not actually engaged in armed combat against fascism; it was also decided to accept Nazis who were not seriously involved in Nazi Party activity, and women who are in sympathy with the aims of the League.*** It was stressed that the backgrounds of new members would be thoroughly investigated. Erich FEIN, Vienna Provincial Leader, said that the League would combat the policy of the present Austrian Government which favors the Atlantic Pact and the continued occupation of Austria. He called for proper political schooling of members, and vigorous reorganization of the League along the following lines: The headquarters of a District should include the leader, organization leader and the treasurer, as well as a propaganda and press official. The present squads should be broken down so that each squad will contain six to twelve men responsible directly to their squad leader. FEIN said that the mission of the squad leaders will be to recruit former members of the Schutzbund for active cooperation with the League. He said that the League has succeeded in recruiting disillusioned Socialists of the SCHARF group in three Vienna Districts, and further efforts must be made in this direction. HEXMANN in a subsequent speech told the meeting that the League must continue its fight against the prominent Nazis but that it should stretch out a welcoming hand to the mass of small Nazis and their families. He said that anti-Semitism is as strong as it was during the Nazi regime and has appeared in the ranks of the League and of the KPOe.

16. A district meeting of the League took place [redacted] at Vienna VII, Wimbergergasse 30. District leader Julius SIGMETH told the audience that negotiations are being carried on between the KPOe Central Committee and the League to declare the League a subordinate echelon of the Communist Party.***** He pointed out that 80% of the League members are Communists and that the leadership group of the League is composed entirely of Communists. SIGMETH said that the fight against the big Nazis will be carried on but directed that all action against minor Nazis be stopped.***** He instructed the members to acquaint themselves thoroughly with the KPOe program and to support the election campaign in every way possible. Every effort should be made to recruit former members of the Schutzbund, whose addresses can be supplied by one PIERERFELLNER, a left-wing Socialist and a member of the SCHARF group. PIERERFELLNER allegedly intends to join the Communist Party because of SCHARF's tendency to surround himself with ex-officers of the Wehrmacht and to neglect his Socialist friends.

* 25X1 [redacted] Comment: Graulichgasse does not appear in our directory of Vienna streets; it should probably be Greulichplatz which is located in Vienna XXII.

** 25X1 [redacted] Comment: [redacted] corrects and brings up-to-date the [redacted] addresses in the following districts are discussed in the previous report: Vienna VI, VII, VIII, X, XI, XIII, XVII, and XXII. The addresses in Vienna III, IX, XIV, XVIII, and XX are new.

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with the stat [redacted] 1 of this report indicating that only those KPOe officials who sign an individual contract will be acceptable for membership, and implying that the normal prerequisites for membership will not be dropped.

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[redacted] Comment: [redacted]

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[redacted] it would seem [redacted] that the conflict between the League and the KPOe Central Committee mentioned in paragraph 1 of this report has been settled to the advantage of the Central Committee.

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[redacted] Comment: The striking similarity between the speech made at this meeting and the speech by HEXMANN reported in paragraph 15 makes it likely that a policy decision was reached at the first meeting and then handed down to the district level at the second meeting.

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